



Testimony FOR Expedited Bill 35-25
Immigrant Protections (Promoting Community Trust - Immigrant Protections Act)
Montgomery County Council
January 13, 2026

Dear President Fani-González and members of the Council,

SSJC is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in strong support** of the **Expedited Bill 35-25** Immigrant Protections (Promoting Community Trust - Immigrant Protections Act). This is critical legislation to ensure that all County residents feel safe, valued, and welcome in our communities while upholding civil and constitutional rights.

SSJC works to reduce the harms of policing while empowering communities. Critical to this is ensuring that residents feel safe in going out into the community and from being at risk in encounters with local authorities, including law enforcement.

Our immigrant community is under siege by federal government actions. Places in Montgomery County that used to bustle are empty and quiet because immigrants (and some who might be perceived as immigrants) are afraid to venture out for fear of a chance encounter with federal officials or even local law enforcement. Immigrants are having food delivered by local mutual aid groups, getting others to take their children to school (or keeping them home), setting up Standby Guardianship for their children in case the parents are detained or deported, and even afraid to answer their phones or open their door to anyone they do not know.

Meanwhile, immigrants are getting detained when going to required government appointments in Baltimore and Silver Spring, and are now subject to deportation to a “safe” third country even when they present a valid asylum claim in immigration court that is based on harm if they returned to their country of origin. So our immigrants are increasingly fearful of going to required government appointments, which ensures they are targeted and face deportation if found.

Thus it is vital that the County minimize the daily risks immigrants face by protecting them from encounters with federal actions in as many ways as possible and by ensuring that County official actions do not put them at added risk.

SSJC strongly supports efforts to codify into County law immigrant protections and to

strengthen measures to limit and where feasible prohibit the use of County resources and warrant-less cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement or any federal agency for the purpose of detention and deportation, ultimately leading to family separation. During this time, SSJC urges policies and legislation that focus on ensuring that community members feel safe, not threatened by their local government, including their local law enforcement units.

Montgomery County, where immigrants make up 30% of the County's population, knows firsthand the value of diverse communities and the vibrant social fabric that is woven when those communities come together to learn, to work, and to care for one another. Legislation that continues to uphold this truth and honor these immigrant communities by limiting County/ICE partnerships, as allowed by federal and state law, in particular, policies that prohibit the voluntary use of any County resource, including local law enforcement, in the abduction of County residents by ICE are extremely necessary and much welcomed during this time of uncertainty and increased ICE enforcement in our Montgomery County communities and align the County with being a welcoming jurisdictions for residents, regardless of their immigration status.

Montgomery County must stand firmly on the side of families, community trust, racial justice, and constitutional rights. By codifying these protections, the Council will send a clear message that the County rejects using local resources to tear families apart and reaffirms its commitment to being a truly welcoming and safe place for all residents.

SSJC urges a favorable report on Expedite Bill 35-25 Immigrant Protections (Promoting Community Trust - Immigrant Protections Act).